

# Montana

School Nutrition Programs  
Office of Public Instruction  
Division of Health Enhancement and Safety

2014 Annual Report  
(July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014)



[opi.mt.gov](http://opi.mt.gov)

Montana  
**Office of Public Instruction**  
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

January 2015

# Introduction

## School Nutrition Programs

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# Office of Public Instruction

## School Nutrition Programs

School Nutrition Programs aim to promote healthy eating and physical activity through improvements in school meal programs and environments. To foster these changes, School Nutrition Programs have developed a strategic plan for the year. This strategic plan consists of three primary goals:

**1. Improve Program Management and Integrity**

This goal will be accomplished through the use of technology, maintenance and sharing of program information, program management, development of strong relationships with our partners, and improvements in food safety.

**2. Increase Program Access and Participation to End Childhood Hunger**

This goal will be accomplished through increased direct certification efforts and reporting by Montana schools, increased participation in the School Breakfast Program through outreach and alternate service options, and increased Summer Food Service Program participation through outreach and activities for children.

**3. Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Behaviors**

To promote health and reduce childhood obesity, this goal will be accomplished through training and technical assistance to help schools improve the nutritional quality of school meals, use of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and connecting children to local produce through Farm-to-School strategies.

The OPI School Nutrition Programs make improvements to operating procedures as legislation and funding create opportunities.

**Direct Certification** is the process of matching Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients to enrolled students to directly certify their eligibility for free meals at school. During the 2013-2014 school year, the OPI continued to refine and enhance the online Direct Certification Application (DCA) system. The software uses technology to match students enrolled in the state student information system, AIM, to school-aged recipients in SNAP and TANF and limits the amount of manual processes required to certify students for free meals.

**Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** allows high-poverty schools to offer breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students while eliminating the traditional school meal application process. CEP benefits both schools and students by improving student access to school meals while reducing school administrative processes by eliminating the need to qualify meal applications and track student eligibility. Schools having 40 percent or more students identified as directly certified in a public assistance program such as SNAP, TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations are eligible to participate. Ninety-three schools completed agreements to participate in the program, which starts in SY 2014-2015.

# Office of Public Instruction

## School Nutrition Programs

The School Nutrition Programs unit is administered through the OPI Health Enhancement and Safety Division. The School Nutrition Programs service for schools include administration of the eight U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs:

- ✓ National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- ✓ School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- ✓ Afterschool Snack Program
- ✓ Special Milk Program
- ✓ Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- ✓ USDA Food Distribution Program (including the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program)
- ✓ Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- ✓ Montana Team Nutrition Program

School Nutrition Programs reimburse schools for meals served to children; distribute USDA Foods for school meal and summer programs; provide educational workshops for school food service personnel, administrators, and teachers; ensure that schools are in compliance with federal regulations; and provide nutrition education for students to promote healthful habits.

Sponsors choose which programs to participate in based on local needs. Sponsors include public schools, private/nonpublic schools, nonprofit residential child care institutions, government agencies, public or private nonprofit organizations and camps.

### **Vision:**

Our vision is school communities that provide children full access to healthful meals and snacks that nourish minds and bodies and school nutrition environments that encourage healthful lifestyles and are supported by community partnerships.

### **Mission:**

To ensure that schools provide nutritious meals and promote healthy lifestyles through collaborative education and training, and administration of the USDA's School Nutrition Programs.

**Office of Public Instruction  
School Nutrition Programs**  
PO Box 202501  
Helena, MT  
406-444-2501



**Montana Team Nutrition Program  
Montana State University**  
PO Box 173360  
Bozeman, MT 59717-3360  
406-994-5641

# Office of Public Instruction

## School Nutrition Programs

### Program Management and Integrity

#### Program Activities

##### **Administrative Reviews**

The School Nutrition Program (SNP) Review is a comprehensive on-site evaluation of the School Food Authority once every three years. The monitoring process involves review of fiscal integrity and nutritional quality of school nutrition programs. SNP staff conducted 79 administrative reviews during the 2013-2014 school year.

##### **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**

School nutrition staff conducted 41 sponsor and site reviews in 2014. Sponsors who were found to be in violation of program requirements submitted corrective action plans.

#### Program Reporting

##### **Verification of Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications**

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that participate in the National School Lunch Program provide free and reduced-price meal benefits to eligible students through approval of school meal applications. Schools must verify a sample of the applications and report results to the state agency.

Only 16 (6.6 percent) LEAs had less than 80 percent response rate from households, meaning that more than 20 percent of the applicants selected for verification at their school did *not* respond by sending documents that show what they reported on their application was accurate. This verification data serves as the primary source of information on the accuracy of the eligibility determination process.

##### **Sanitation Inspections**

Schools are required to have two sanitation inspections per year and report the number of inspections to the state agency. Montana schools reported the following:

Number of schools that had 0 inspections: 186 (22.9%)

Number of schools that had one inspection: 208 (25.6%)

Number of schools that had two inspections: 418 (51.5%)

# Office of Public Instruction

## School Nutrition Programs

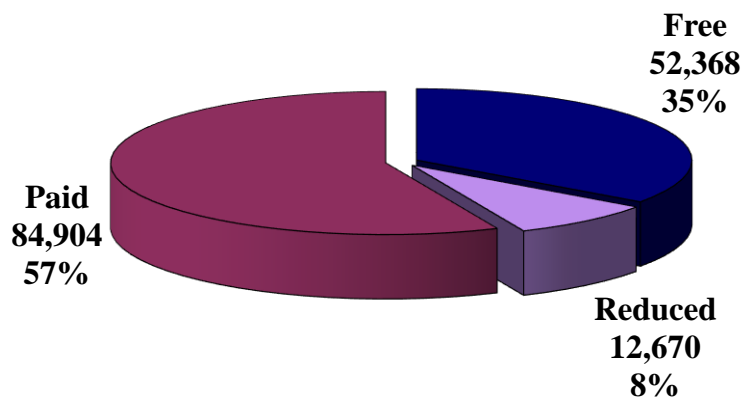
### Program Access

Children who come from low-income families are at most risk for hunger and food insecurity. Improved access to affordable meals helps decrease the likelihood of children living in hunger.

At the beginning of each school year, schools send households a free and reduced-price school meal application to allow eligible families to apply. Completion of the income documentation permits School Nutrition Programs to offer meal benefits to students based on income eligibility.

During the 2013-2014 school year, 149,942 students were enrolled in schools that participated in School Nutrition Programs. Of these enrolled students, 52,368 (35 percent) were eligible for free meals, 12,670 (8 percent) were eligible for reduced-price meals, and 84,904 (57 percent) were eligible for paid meals.

### Percent of Students by Eligibility Category



A total of 65,038 (43 percent) of Montana students were eligible for free and reduced-price school meals in 2014.

# National School Lunch Program

The National School Lunch Program began in 1946 under the National School Lunch Act and is intended to help meet the nutrition needs of children from low-income households.

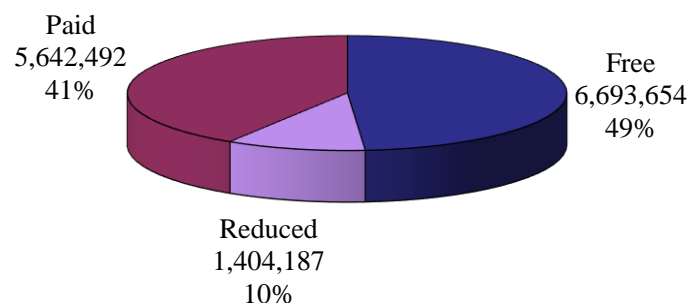
More than 13.7 million lunches were served during the 2014 school year.

## Total Lunches Served



On a daily basis, 52 percent (79,446) of the total eligible students (149,492) participated in the National School Lunch Program. Students consuming school lunches are predominately eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

## Student Lunches by Category

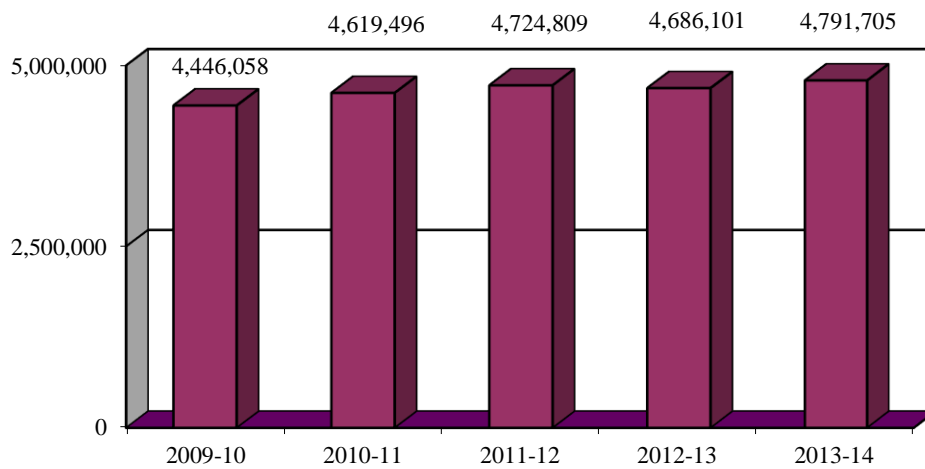


# School Breakfast Program

The School Breakfast Program began as a pilot project in 1966 and was made permanent in 1975. *Combined, a school breakfast and lunch provide over half the nutrition that a child needs in a day.*

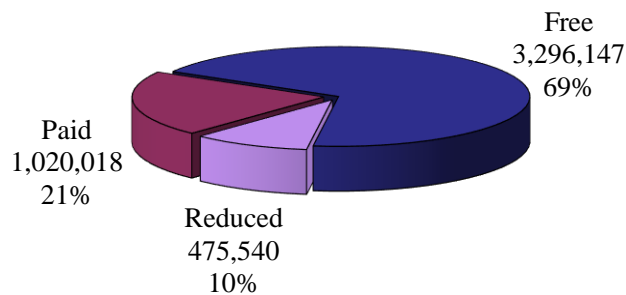
More than 4.7 million breakfasts were served during the 2014 school year.

**Total Breakfasts Served**



On a daily basis, 18 percent (27,357) of the total eligible students (149,942) participated in the School Breakfast Program. Students eating breakfast meals are predominately eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

**Student Breakfasts by Category**





# School Breakfast Program

Researchers concur that eating breakfast helps student perform better in school. According to the 2013 *Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report*, only 40 percent of high school students reported eating breakfast in the past seven days prior to the survey.

In the 2013-2014 school year, 27,357 students participated in the School Breakfast Program on a daily basis, which means 18 percent of the children eligible to participate in the program are eating breakfast at school. Breakfast is offered at 689 out of 827 (83 percent) of Montana schools.

The OPI and Team Nutrition provide educational workshops and technical assistance to school employees on meeting breakfast meal pattern requirements and how to operate a successful program. Adoption of the Community Eligibility Provision (which provides meals to students at no cost) is expected to increase breakfast participation rates in SY 2014-2015 beyond the steady one to two percent annual rate.

Research shows that schools with breakfast programs can also improve participation by expanding student access through alternative service styles such as breakfast in the classroom and grab-and-go. The OPI works in collaboration with No Kid Hungry and the Montana Food Bank Network to meet the goal of expanding school breakfast access. No Kid Hungry, in partnership with the governor's office, started a *Breakfast after the Bell* initiative to encourage schools to serve school breakfast after the start of the school day. The initiative gained momentum with breakfast grants and recognition of high-achieving schools. Two schools were awarded *The First Lady School Breakfast Award* in February 2014. Fromberg School District started a new breakfast program and Corvallis High School implemented a morning grab-n-go meal service.

Montana Food Bank Network developed a variety of breakfast resources for schools to help make breakfast more accessible and offered additional guidance to schools wishing to enhance their breakfast program.

Only 40 percent of  
high school students  
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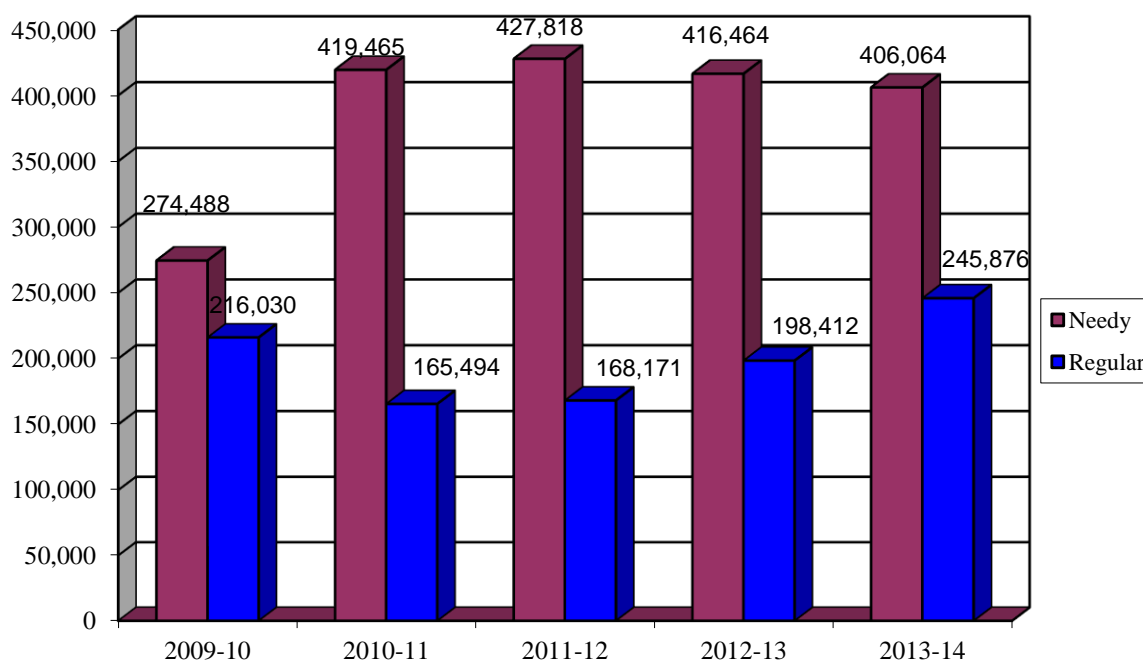
*2013 Montana Youth Risk  
Behavior Survey Report*

# Afterschool Snack Program

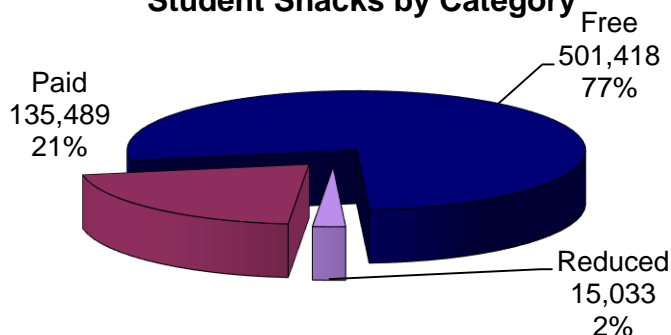
Started in 1998, the Afterschool Snack Program offers children education and enrichment activities that are safe, fun, and filled with learning opportunities. Schools in which 50 percent of the students qualify for free and reduced-price lunches are considered area eligible (needy) and students qualify for free snacks.

Over the past year, there was an increase of 37,064 snacks served.

**Total After School Snacks Served**



**Student Snacks by Category**

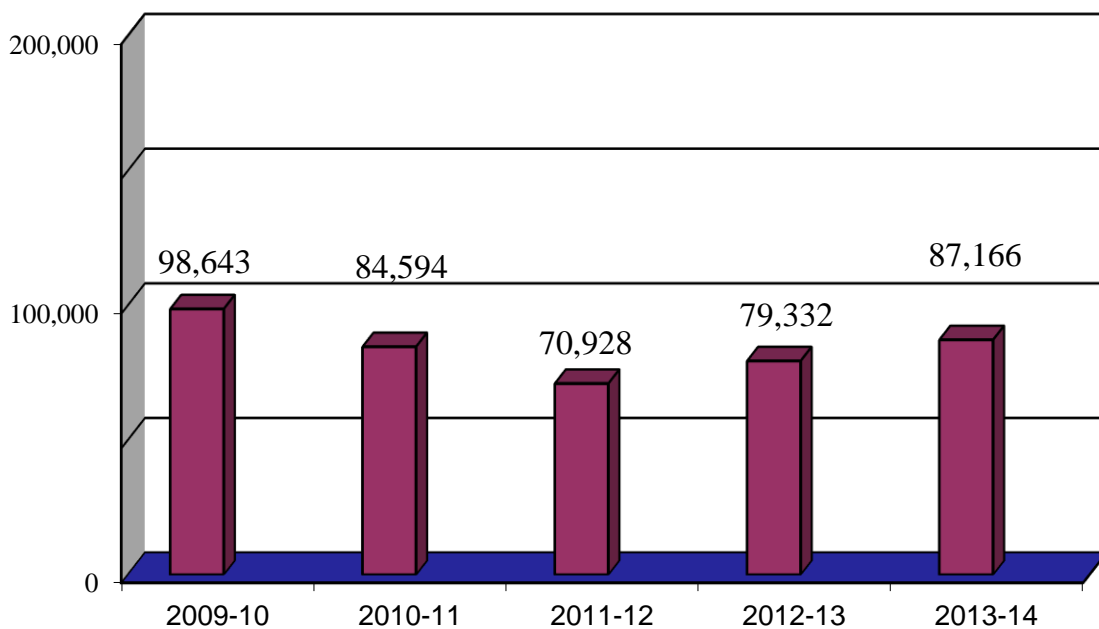


# Special Milk Program

Schools that do not offer other school meal programs or kindergarten students who do not have access to lunch and breakfast at school may participate in the Special Milk Program.

Sixteen schools that participated in the Special Milk Program during 2014. Over the past year, there was an Increase of 7,834 half-pints served.

**Total Half Pints of Milk Served**



# Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program



The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) was developed as catalyst to combat childhood obesity by exposing children to fresh fruits and vegetables and helping them learn more healthful eating habits. The FFVP was successfully implemented in 163 schools in 2014, five more than the previous school year.

## ***School Selection:***

Elementary school

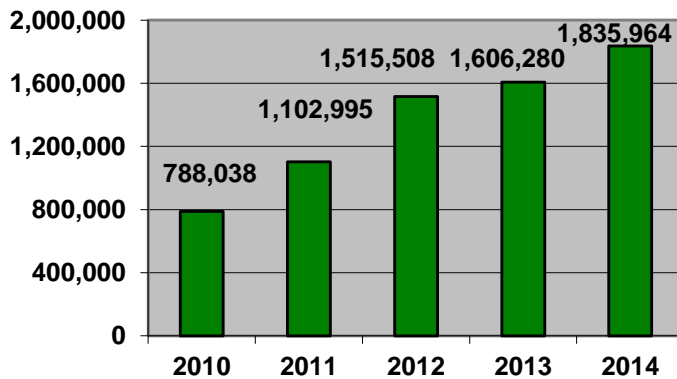
National School Lunch Program participant

FFVP application

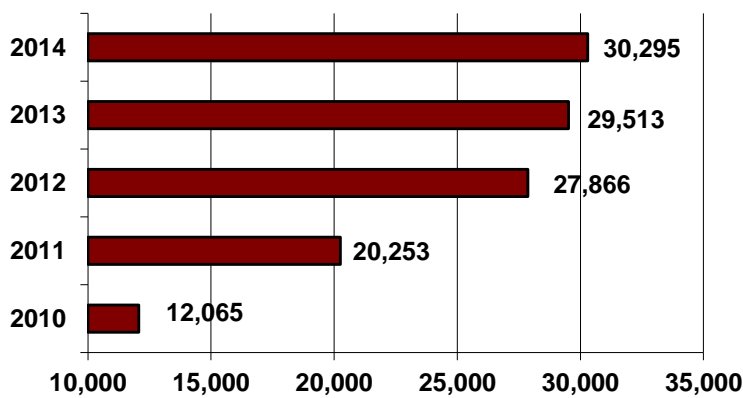
Highest priority given to schools with the highest percentage of free and reduced students.

Total enrollment of all schools selected must result in \$50-75 per student allocation each year.

**FFVP Funding**



**FFVP Enrollment**

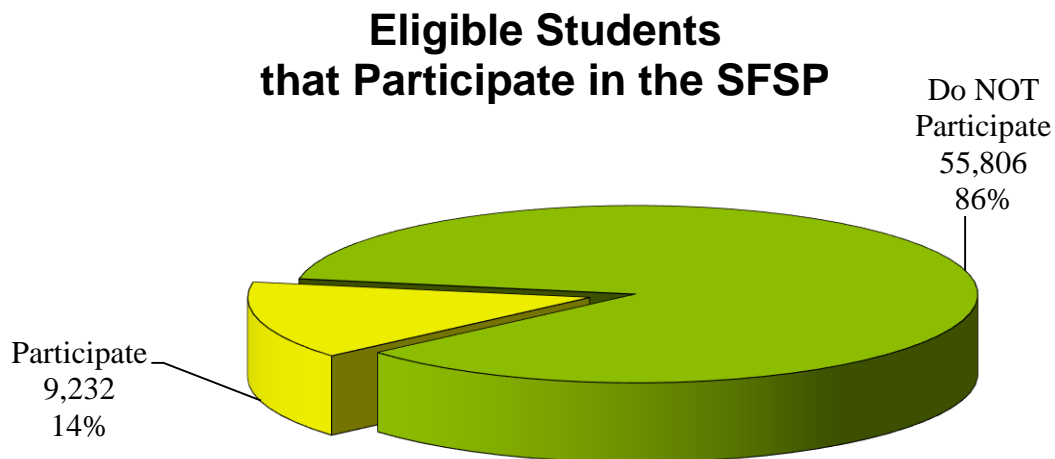


# Summer Food Service Program

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides nutritious meals at no charge to children while school is not in session. This program was established to ensure that children in low-income areas could continue to receive nutritious meals in between school sessions.

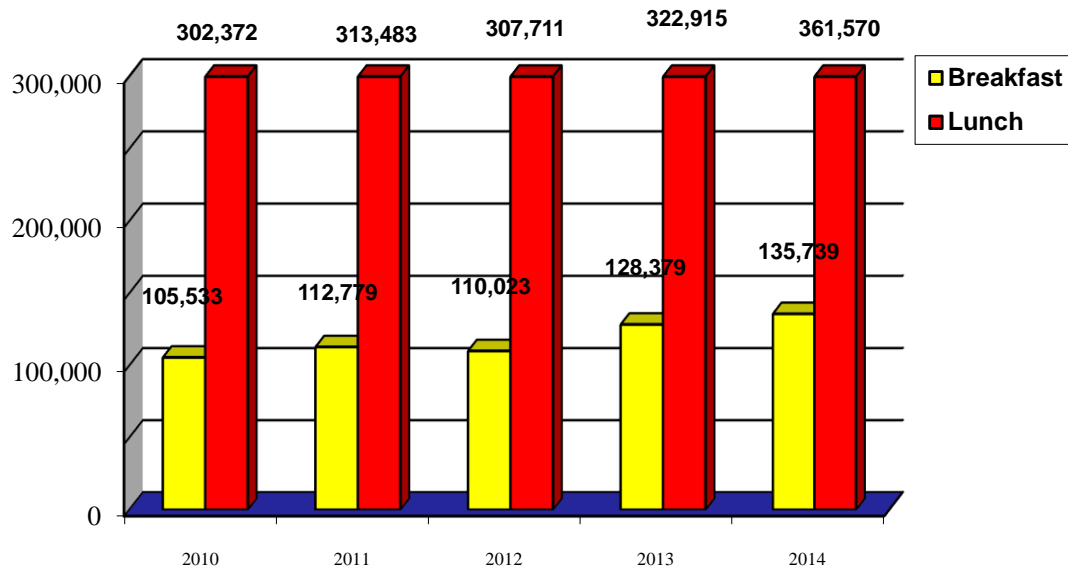
Montana SFSP sites serve children in small rural communities, seven of the larger cities, and each of the seven American Indian reservations. Sites operate in low-income areas where at least half of the children come from families that qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Of the 68,038 children eligible for free and reduced-price meals, 9,232 (14 percent) participated daily in the SFSP. In 2014, 361,570 lunches were served which is an increase of 38,655 meals from the previous year.

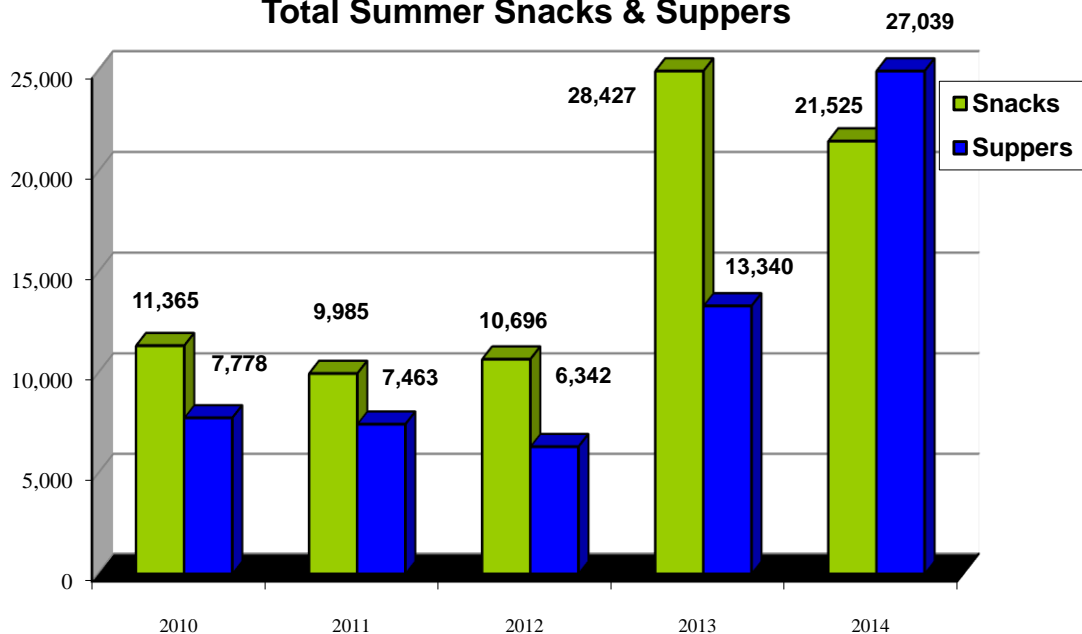


# Summer Food Service Program

## Total Summer Breakfasts & Lunches



## Total Summer Snacks & Suppers



# Summer Food Service Program

## Montana Summer Food Summit 2014

### Growing Summer Food Programs

School Nutrition Programs hosted the fourth annual Summer Food Summit conference in 2014. The summit provided sponsors an opportunity to learn and discuss ways to grow their summer food programs through fun site activities, marketing, and innovative strategies. Some of the strategies included; kick off events, boosting menus, coordinating with school resources, transportation, and Senior Corps volunteer networks. Sponsors also learned about grant opportunities and tips for applying. The conference qualified as the required SFSP sponsor training.

Forty-seven people representing 27 of the 92 Sponsors (29 percent) attended, as well as representatives from the Montana Food Bank Network, Montana No Kid Hungry, DPHHS, MSU Extension SNAP-Ed and EFNEP, AmeriCorps VISTA, and FoodCorps.

## Promotion and Activities to Increase Participation

Two summer youth ambassadors from the No Kid Hungry program worked with the OPI to promote SFSP sites, provide strategies to improve site participation, and recruit volunteers. No Kid Hungry also awarded mini-grants to sponsors in support summer meal outreach strategies.

# USDA Food Distribution Program



The USDA Food Distribution Program delivers USDA Foods to School Food Authorities. USDA Foods account for 15 to 20

percent of school nutrition program food. During the 2013-2014 school year, schools received an entitlement of 23.25 cents for each lunch served (during the previous school year) to spend on commodity foods. This entitlement totaled \$2,867,175.

## USDA Foods are a healthy food choice.

USDA continually explores ways to offer healthy food choices so that schools can serve meals consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

### Whole Grains

Items include brown rice, rolled oats, whole wheat flour, and whole grain spaghetti.

### Less Sugar

Items include canned fruits packed in light syrup, water, or natural juices.

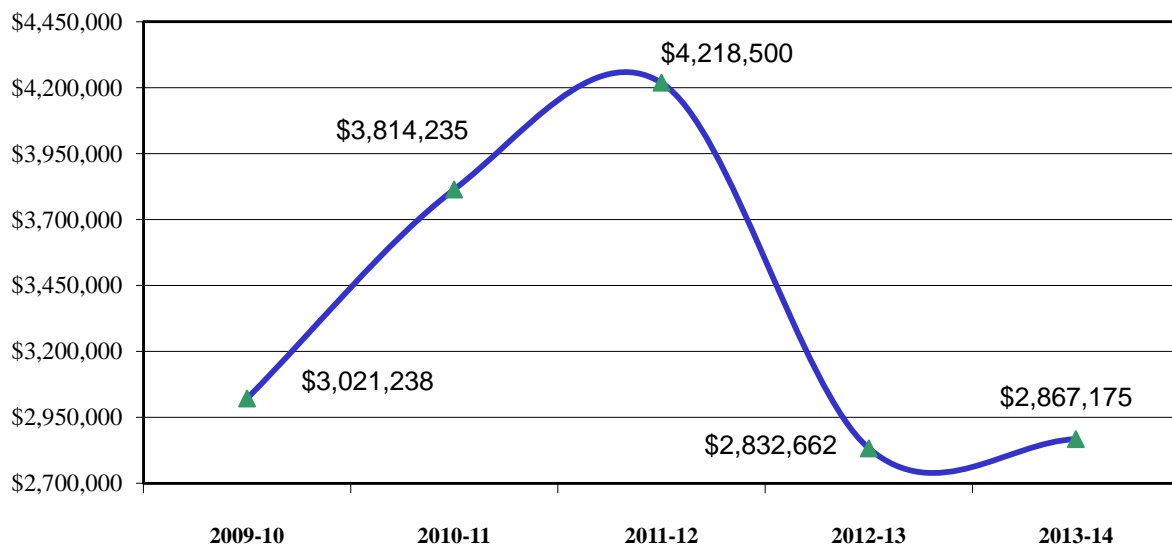
### Less Fat

Items include 85 percent lean ground beef, 97 percent lean ham, 95 percent lean turkey ham, diced chicken, part skim mozzarella, and no trans-fat in frozen potato products.

### Less Sodium

Canned vegetables are being reduced to 140 mg of sodium per serving.

## Total Value of USDA Foods





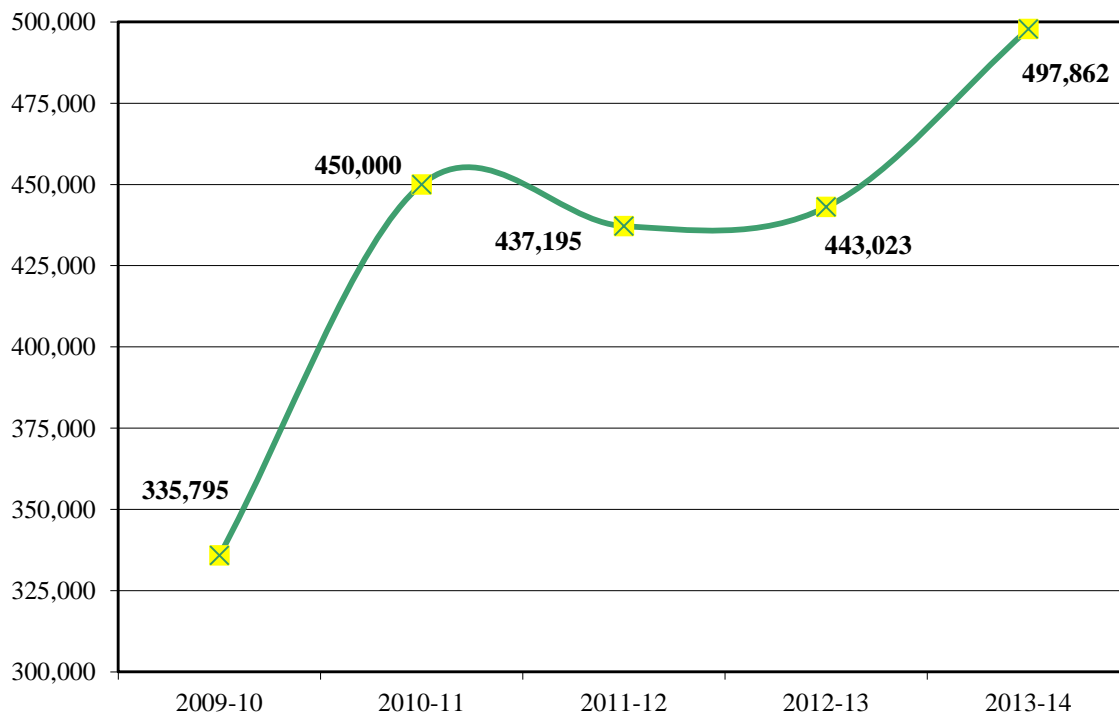
# Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

## Department of Defense



A portion of the total entitlement for Montana's Food Distribution Program is set aside for the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. This program, administered through the U.S. Department of Defense, allows schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program to use the USDA commodity entitlement to purchase high quality fresh fruits and vegetables. During the 2013-2014 school year, Montana schools spent \$497,862 for fresh fruits and vegetables using this program.

**Total Value of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables**



# Montana Team Nutrition Program

Team Nutrition is a USDA competitive grant focused on improving children's lifelong eating and physical activity habits by integrating the principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and USDA's MyPlate into comprehensive, behavior-based education. Montana State University in Bozeman is home to the **Montana Team Nutrition Program**, which serves as the nutrition education component of School Nutrition Programs.



Team Nutrition provides professional development and technical assistance to the staff at school and child care facilities throughout the state of Montana. During the 2013-2014 school year, Team Nutrition connected with 840 school staff and/or community partners from 335 school districts/organizations, which impacts the potential of 140,277 students. Cafeteria, classroom, and community initiatives focused on the consistency of educational messages within these core areas:

1. Strengthening School Wellness and Improving Quality of School Meals
2. Enhancing Focus on Nutrition Education and Farm to School Programs
3. Ending Childhood Hunger and Reducing Childhood Obesity

## Strengthening School Wellness and Improving Quality of School Meals

- Administered the *2014 School Wellness in Action Mini-Grant Program*, which distributed \$20,000 in mini-grants to 12 school districts to support healthier school environment policies and procedures.
- Assisted five schools from three school districts to receive a *HealthierUS School Challenge Award* or a *Healthier Montana Menu Challenge Award*.
- Developed and conducted professional development workshops - *Build a Rainbow on Your Tray; Montana Cook Fresh; Baking with Whole Grains*- that educated school food service staff on the USDA's new meal pattern and culinary skills. These four-hour workshops engage the learner through food demonstrations and hands-on cooking projects.
- Continued to teach the principles of Pleasant and Positive Mealtimes including *Recess before Lunch* ([www.opi.mt.gov/pleasantmealtimes](http://www.opi.mt.gov/pleasantmealtimes)) through workshops and technical assistance to schools. Cosponsored the first of three *Helping Children Eat and Grow Well* workshops in June 2014 with the Montana Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Conducted five regional or statewide presentations on the USDA's School Wellness Policy or its new *Smart Snack Rule* to school staff and community partners.
- Conducted one professional development food safety workshop on School Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point to school food service staff.

# Montana Team Nutrition Program

- Offered a *Smarter Lunchrooms Movement* ([www.smarterlunchrooms.org](http://www.smarterlunchrooms.org)) workshop to school food service staff, and initiated a Smarter Lunchroom pilot project with five high schools to determine how Smarter Lunchroom principles impact school meal participation and student plate waste. The pilot project is in collaboration with MSU, Bozeman's Smarter Lunchroom grant received from the BEN Center at Cornell University.

## Enhancing Focus on Nutrition Education and Farm to School Programs

### Nutrition Education

- Increased access to nutrition education curricula, professional development workshops or technical assistance to through promotion of agency and partner websites, such as [www.opi.mt.gov/nutritioneducation](http://www.opi.mt.gov/nutritioneducation) or [www.opi.mt.gov/Farm2School](http://www.opi.mt.gov/Farm2School).
- Promoted the use of the statewide *Nutrition Education for Youth and Families Directory* posted at this website: <http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/SchoolFood/NutritionEdDirectory.pdf>.
- Conducted six nutrition education professional development workshops at statewide, regional conferences, or individual districts.
- Sponsored an exhibit table for the OPI's Health Enhancement and Safety Division at the *2013 Montana Educator's Association Conference*. Distributed nutrition education curricula or resources (including sets of the thirteen *Montana Specialty Food Posters* developed by the Mission Mountain Food and Enterprise Center).

### Farm to School

- Conducted multiple presentations and provided technical assistance on local food procurement practices, garden-based nutrition education, and community connections with agricultural partners.
- Facilitated a statewide campaign to celebrate *National Farm to School Month* in October 2013. Cosponsored the first *Montana Crunch Time* to celebrate *Food Day* on October 24, 2013, that reached 11,000 students around the state. This fun event motivated students to enjoy a Montana or regional-grown apple and learn about fun apple facts or recipes.
- Participated as an active member in a statewide Montana Beef to School Network to explore steps needed to increase procurement of local beef by school food service programs.
- Provided technical assistance to the ten Montana FoodCorps service members on school wellness and nutrition education policies and collaborated with National Center of Appropriate Technology (NCAT) to support their initiatives.
- Serve as the state liaison to the National Farm to School Network, and collaborate with Grow Montana, MSU Extension, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana FoodCorps and the NCAT to strengthen grassroots support for Farm to School as a successful strategy of improving children's health. Led the submission process of a *2015 USDA Farm to School Grant* application in partnership with the OPI, with support from NCAT and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

# Montana Team Nutrition Program

## Ending Childhood Hunger and Reducing Childhood Obesity

- Participated and provided leadership and resources to statewide and local nutrition organizations that foster children's healthy eating habits and reduce hunger, including Montana Action for Healthy Kids, Eat Right Montana Coalition, Montana School Nutrition Association, the Montana Partnership to End Childhood Hunger, and Montana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.
  - Provided leadership on the planning committee for hosting the *Build a Stronger Montana: End Childhood Hunger Summit* in September 2013; Contributed nutrition education data to the *10 Step Plan to End Childhood Hunger in Montana* (2010-2020 publication).
  - Served as a preceptor site for the Montana Dietetic Internship Program and mentored four interns to increase their understanding of child nutrition programs while giving them applied learning opportunities as a future dietitian.
  - Participated as an active member of the planning committee for the 2014 Montana Behavioral Initiative Summer Institute. Contributions included planning three early bird health-related presentations, daily wellness activities, and the menus for snacks and the Best Practice Expo. The presentations covered these topics: smart snacks that fuel student success, positive body image, and classroom-based physical activity strategies.
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# OPI Cooperative Purchase Program

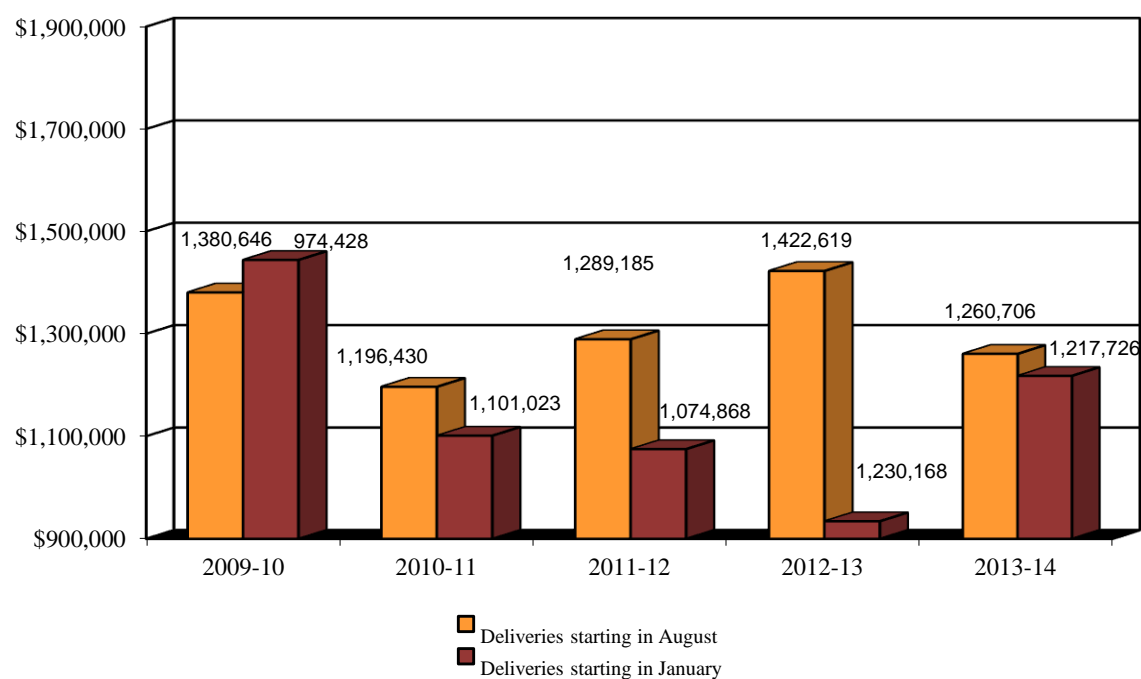


The OPI Cooperative Purchase Program was implemented in 1980 to assist schools in purchasing high-quality nutritious foods and standard kitchen paper/plastic supplies at reasonable prices. All participating schools receive items at the same price regardless of size or location. There are two bids a year and four deliveries per bid for a total of eight food deliveries per year. The fall bid is delivered between August-December and the winter bid is delivered January-May.

The Advisory for the Bid and Commodity Committee, which consists of state agency staff and school foodservice personnel, meets three times a year to sample and discuss products. The committee helps keep the bid current with regulations, student centric trends, and cost.

School Nutrition Programs serve as a liaison between schools and food manufacturers, producers, processors, distributors, and representatives. During the 2013-2014 school year, Montana schools purchased \$2,478,432 worth of food through the OPI Cooperative Purchase Program.

## Value of Food Purchased by Schools

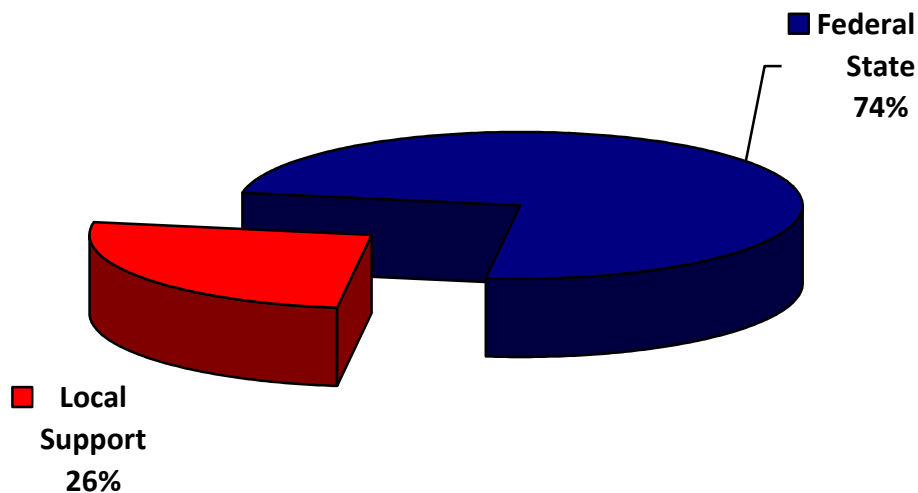


# Funding and Reimbursement

## Financial Management

The USDA provides general assistance for every reimbursable meal served to children in school according to reimbursement rates that are updated yearly. School Food Authorities received \$39,462,488 in federal reimbursement and \$663,861 in state matching funds in program income in 2013-2014. The state matching funds were used to cover the cost of shipping and handling, storage, and processing of USDA Foods.

### Child Nutrition Program Expenditures



Overall school expenditures were \$54,096,059. After subtracting federal reimbursement and state match, local support to the meal programs was \$13,969,710, or 26 percent, of the total expenditures. Local support includes students who pay for breakfast and lunch.

# Funding and Reimbursement

FUNDING FOR THE SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS IN MONTANA	
July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014	
<u>Income</u>	
National School Lunch Program Meals	\$25,677,810
Afterschool Snacks	\$416,871
USDA Foods Entitlement	\$2,867,175
<b>National School Lunch Program (lunches, snacks and commodities)</b>	<b>\$28,961,856</b>
 <b>School Breakfast Program</b>	 <b>\$7,208,512</b>
 <b>Special Milk Program</b>	 <b>\$18,920</b>
 <b>Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program</b>	 <b>\$1,602,800</b>
  <b>Summer Food Service Program</b>	  <b>\$1,670,400</b>
 <b>Total Federal Funding</b>	 <b>\$39,462,488</b>
<b>Total State Matching Funds</b>	<b>\$663,861</b>
<b>Total Federal and State Funding</b>	<b>\$40,126,349</b>
<u>Expenditures</u>	
School expenditures (food, labor, other)	\$54,096,059
Federal and state reimbursement	\$40,126,349
Student, adult payments, general fund, other sources	\$13,969,710